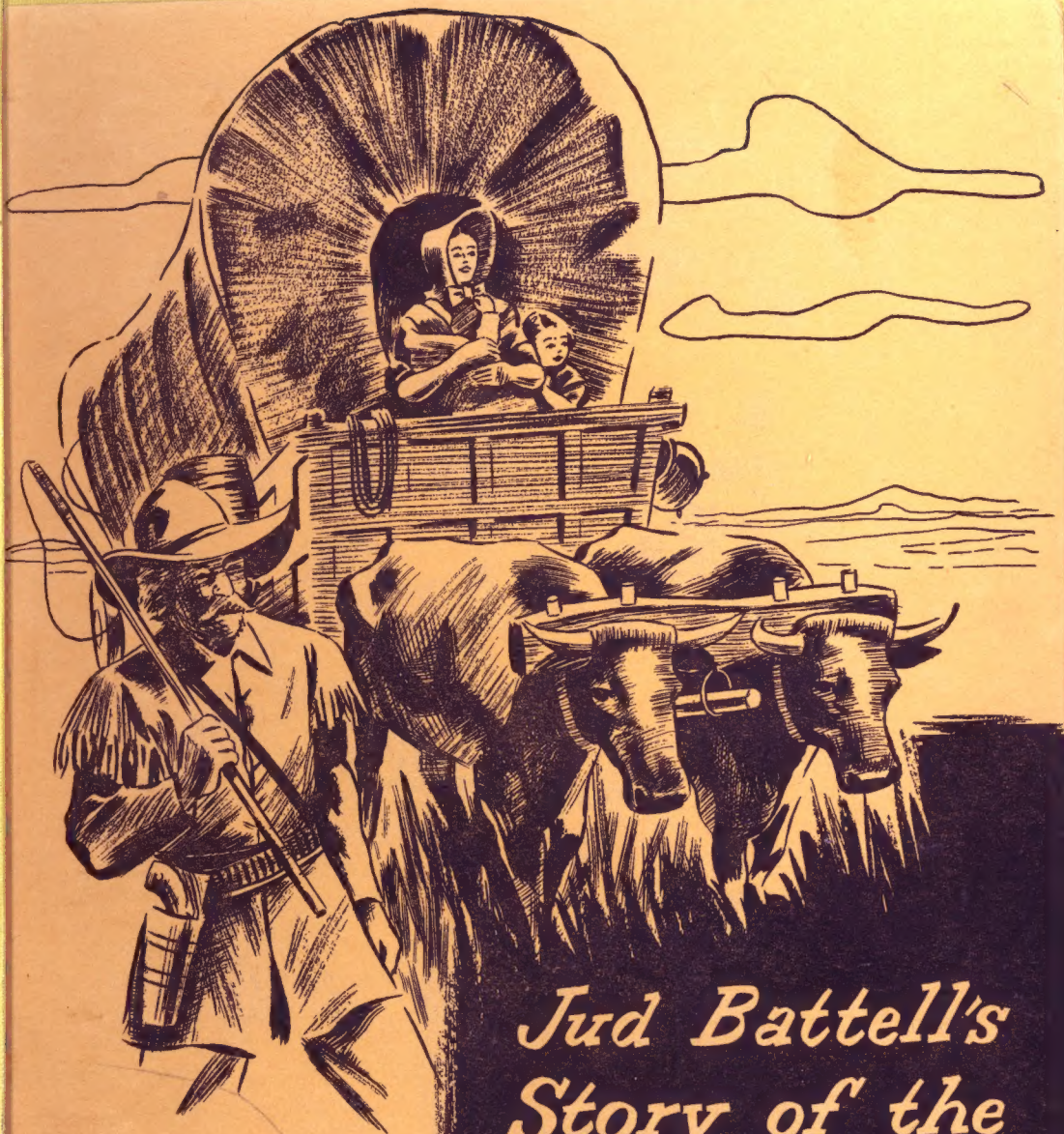


JUD BATTLE'S STORY OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WEST

EVANGELINE CHAPMAN



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Jud Battell's Story Of

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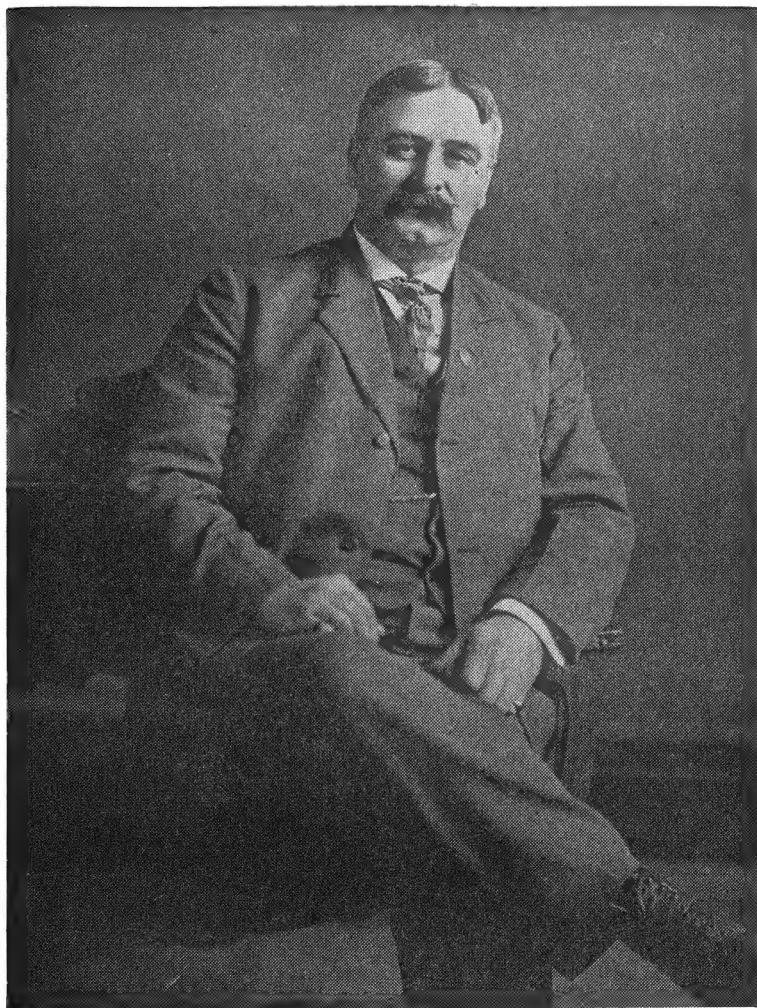
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JUD BATTELL

PREFACE

Mr. Jud Battell, a handsome and far-from-old-looking gentleman of eighty years sat in my sunny living room on several mornings in the early spring of 1947, and told me this story.

It is a story, warm with the romance of the early days of the prairie. It is keen with expectation and adventure. And it is fabulous as are so many stories of the West, where fortunes were made, those days—and lost—overnight. This, then, is Jud Battell's story, as it was told to me.

CHAPTER I

In the year 1881 my brother, Henry Battell left Winnipeg, working west. He was a sort of civil engineer surveying for the government. They were doing a block line, working as far west as they could, before Winter came. Caribou Street, Moose Jaw, is a block line. These block lines are twenty-four miles apart. The one they were working on was twenty-four miles south of Caribou Street.

In November they ran into Johnson Lake. (At that time it was called Old Wives Lake. It was called that because of the Indian legend, which was true. The Cree Indians from up North used to come down and spend their summers picking berries around the lake and shooting ducks and geese. Scouts were camped on what is now the Battell farm. The scouts reported that the Blackfeet from the West were on their way. So the tribe packed up and left hastily. But to divert their pursuers they left a few tents and in them a few old wives. They started back for the country north of the Saskatchewan. The Blackfeet came, fired round after round into the sagging tents, and when they were sure that no one remained alive within, they stealthily raised the flaps and peered inside. No one remained alive. And within, instead of the crowded garrison they had expected to find, only the bodies of a few old women met their eyes. The bodies were buried on the Battell farm, where their bones lie to this day.)

When the surveying party reached Old Wives Lake, they hit north to The Crossing. This was the Hudson Bay trail across the creek at what is now the City of Moose Jaw, approximately where the C.P.R. runs. The C.P.R. had been surveyed to the Creek, but no further. That night they made camp on the height overlooking the valley where the Moose Jaw Creek from the north and Thunder Creek from the West joined. To the North and the South of the fertile valley stretched a level treeless plain, although there were trees along the rivers' banks. Henry Battell looked East in the direction of distant Winnipeg and West in the direction of distant Calgary. He said, "Some day a city will be built on this place. It is a beautiful spot. There is more water than any place else between Brandon and Medicine Hat. And it is the half-way mark between Winnipeg and the mountains." At that moment a dream was born in the mind of Henry Battell. He would have a part in the building of that city.

Henry returned to Winnipeg where he worked for the rest of the Winter as a carpenter. Winnipeg was booming, and growing with the rapidity of the proverbial bean-stalk. The winter was cold and they built the city hall in the dead of winter. They didn't understand building in the cold weather then, and the building didn't stand. "I was there later when it collapsed," said Jud Battell.

In February Henry returned home to Cobourg, Ontario. The dream was about to become a reality. He said to his brothers, "Get ready, boys. We're going to the North West Territories. I've found a place on the plains where some day a city will stand. People are making fortunes every day in Winnipeg. Some day the same will be true of Moose Jaw. Right now, there is no one within ninety miles."

They floated a company. They got eight influential men to help finance the project. Among the men interested were—their Member of Parliament to the government at Ottawa, their Member to the Legislative Assembly at Toronto, the Post Master and the local doctor. Their plan was to buy eight half-sections from the C.P.R., and the eight men in the party were to each homestead a quarter-section as a pre-emption. This plan allowed one to pay ten dollars, then acquire the land at two dollars and a half an acre with several years to pay the full amount. Thus they would acquire eight full sections, probably the whole city site. The company agreed to help finance them and to provide a year's provisions.

The party included the four Battell brothers, Henry, Joe, Charlie and the fifteen-year-old Jud; two of their brothers-in-law, John Shiels, and George Keyes; a brother-in-law of Henry, Gubbins Potter; and Fred Phillips whose mother was a sister of the father of the Battell brothers. There must have been misgiving in the hearts of the parents as they watched the fifteen-year-old boy go.

"If you stay," said the father, "when you are twenty-one, I will set you up on your own farm, the same as I did the two oldest boys." Jud considered the two propositions and the West won. He was only fifteen years old, but if he had not come along, excellent swimmer that he was, the party might never have reached their goal. But that is anticipating my story.

The eight oxen, the four wagons, the machinery and tools, the feed for the oxen, and the year's supplies of flour, bacon, hardtack, tea, coffee and sugar were assembled and placed on a freight car at Cobourg, the county town of Northumberland County on Lake Ontario, March 29, 1882. The car was never unloaded in the thirteen days that it took to reach Winnipeg. They travelled by way of Windsor, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul and Emerson, and thence through deep snow drifts to Winnipeg.

It was a Sunday morning when the party unloaded in Winnipeg. The thaw had begun during the night and the mud was past the men's knee. One of Henry's oxen had kicked against the wall of the car until his legs were ruined. Henry had to buy another yoke of oxen in Winnipeg. That left an odd ox. They decided to ship everything on as far as Brandon to escape the mud. They went back through the streets of Winnipeg, through the deep mud, all eight of them each perched on an ox's back.

They unloaded at Brandon. There was a terrific snow storm, and they could go no further. They got the C.P.R. to ship everything except the wagons and oxen to Flat Creek, a place about forty-five miles west of Brandon. They drove the oxen and empty wagons that far, unloaded their equipment from the train into their wagons and came as far as Virden, Manitoba, then called Gopher Creek. The flood was bad. The men at Gopher Creek were building a bridge. But the one-time Creek had swelled to a river an eighth of a mile across. The men took one of their new wagon boxes, and using their extra shirts for rags and some tar which they were able to get from the C.P.R., they caulked up one of their wagon boxes and made a boat of it. They put ropes on the boat back and front, and loaded it full of supplies. They swam across the river pulling the boat over by one rope and back by the other, until all their ploughs, equipment and provisions and wagons were safely on the other side. Then they swam the oxen over. The whole operation took three days, and hardy men they must have been, to stand the cold of that icy water so early in the year. They marked the date on their calendar, May first, 1882.

On the west side of the water, they found the remains of an Indian camp. The embers of the camp-fire were scarcely cold, and left to die beside the deserted camp was a young pony. The boy Jud placed his hand on the velvet lips. The exhausted pony nuzzled his hand in gratitude. "She's alive," he shouted, running to the Battell camp. He took water and a dish of chop, a warm blanket to cover the young pony, and all night long stayed by her and tended her, rubbing her raw flanks where she had worn the hair off, trying to drag her tired body to reach more grass roots. The next night the pony seemed greatly improved. "Help me raise her," he called. And the older brothers helped, raising the pony to her feet. The men were impatient to be gone but the boy would not leave the pony. By the next morning she was able to go with them, tied to the back of the wagon. Later she proved a blessing to the trouble-ridden campers.

The men loaded their wagons and hitched up the oxen and started once more westward.

One night when they were camped three miles south of Fort Qu'Appelle, a blizzard struck their camp. The tents began to blow down, and the cattle drifted away. The hardy travellers groped in the pitch darkness and pegged down their tents, securing them against the weather. But they could do nothing about the cattle until morning. As soon as daylight lit the sky, Jud jumped on his newly-acquired pony, and scoured the surrounding country. He found all of the cows but one, and returned them safely to the camp. The one cow they never did find. "We never would have found any," said Jud, "if I hadn't had my pony."

At this point Henry grew impatient.

"We are taking too long," he said, premonition dogging his mind. "Someone will get there before us."

He took the odd ox whose mate had kicked his legs useless in the box car, and set on ahead, riding on its back. The rest of the party followed.

Eventually they arrived at Pile of Bones Creek. Pile of Bones, today, has been dammed to form the beautiful Wascana Lake, the setting for the Parliament Buildings at Regina. Where the railroad now runs, the old Hudson Bay trail stretched over the prairie. Pile of Bones Creek, too, was in flood, and the Battell party were the first men to cross it that Spring. Jud being the youngest and best swimmer, he volunteered to swim the creek to find the best place to tackle a crossing. When he arrived on the far bank his body was freezing from the icy water. He ran up and down the bank, flinging his arms around his body to get his circulation going. Reconnoitring, he found a place where he thought the party could cross. Then he swam back across the icy water, and gladly put on his warm clothes.

The men put the ploughs and machinery in the bottom of the wagon boxes and put the food on top to keep it dry. They hitched all eight oxen on to each wagon at a time. Then they started across the stretch of water. But the water was so deep that in some places, some of the oxen had to swim. However, by having eight head of oxen on the wagon at a time, some would have a footing while some still swam. At last the bank was reached. Again they marked the calendar, May 24, 1882.

The next morning, the party rose at daybreak. The air of excitement tensed the whole camp. The journey was nearly over. That day they travelled forty-five miles, and that night, made camp at Moose Jaw.

But it was a crest-fallen Henry who met them there. They were not the first to claim the future city.

CHAPTER II

Henry Battell saw the party coming, as they wound down the hill to the river's edge. He ran down to the bank of the Moose Jaw on the west side of the stream. Again it was going to be necessary to ford a stream. But this time Henry knew where to bring them across. He waved his arms in direction, and shouted to the weary travellers. Once more they swam their entire equipment across the swollen stream. But this time, May 25, 1882, they knew it was for the last time. In the camp from which Henry had come, the Battell party saw men moving about. Henry's explanation was laconic.

"They beat us," he said.

The men came down now to meet the new-comers. Henry introduced them.

"James H. Ross," he said. Ross was later the first elected member to the Assembly, at Regina.

"Fred Ross." James' brother.

"Sutherland." This was the Senator's son.

"Billie Burton."

"Jack Waddell."

"Tommy Healey."

"MacDonald."

"Butler."

In all there were ten. But some of the names are forgotten.

It seemed that the other man who had surveyed the C.P.R. to the Creek, had gone back East with the same idea as Henry. He had hired MacDonald and Butler and supplied them with a year's provisions and equipment. They were to go back to where the Moose Jaw and the Thunder forked and to take up land. On the way they camped at Griswold, Manitoba, near the home of the Ross family.

"And where in the world are you going in November?" asked the elder Ross.

Then came the story of the site that would one day be a city. It was adventure, irresistible to young men with red blood in their veins. The longer the Ross brothers thought of it, the more strong became their urge to go. In February it would no longer be denied. With two ponies and two jumpers and a supply of provisions they set out westward. They drove on the ice, making the rivers serve as their highways. They followed the Assiniboine River to where the Qu'Appelle River emptied into the Assiniboine. They followed the Qu'Appelle to Buffalo Lake. At this point they switched to the bed of the Moose Jaw and followed it down to where it and the Thunder forked. They built a shack near where the Robin Hood Mill now stands. And they took up the section of land on the East side of the present Main

Street. MacDonald and Butler had taken the section from Main Street West. Sutherland took the section adjoining them to the West, west of the present Ninth Avenue, now City View Subdivision. Burton and MacDonald also took the section where the College now stands. Others took the section to the South-East.

The Battell brothers were bitterly disappointed. Some of the party wanted to go back home. But others were more easily restored to hope.

"We'll stay," said Henry. "We can get land close by, that will some day be valuable, even though we don't get the city site."

They stayed.

They took up land. They took a section in the City View area, and a section in C.P.R. subdivision, where the cemetery now is located, and two sections west of that. One brother located on the section to the south-west and the section west of it. The Battell party held six sections along Caribou Street West. They held the first Government section to the North-East, and the C.P.R. section east of that.

All of the early settlers acquired the land at two dollars and fifty cents an acre. Of this they got a rebate of a dollar and a quarter for every acre broken. They needed to pay down, only fifty cents an acre, and had six years in which to pay the rest.

Thirty years later, in the boom of 1910 and 1911, all of this land sold as city lots, at any figure from one hundred dollars to five hundred dollars an acre. The fever spread across an ocean. People in the British Isles were infected.

The Battell party had one sack of potatoes to spare from their provisions, for seed. They put the plough in the ground and ran a shallow furrow about five inches deep. In that furrow they ran another shallow furrow and dropped the potato seed into the subsoil covering it lightly. The rain came incessantly that spring. From that one bag of potatoes, they reaped, that Fall, fifty bushels. After a diet of beans, oatmeal and hardtack the mealy white tubers were delicious.

They had brought no grain for sowing purposes. So they let the oxen graze on the green grass and sowed the remainder of the oats and wheat which they had brought for the oxen. It multiplied and grew. They cut the grain and stacked it for feed.

The brothers-in-law went to Buffalo Lake and got poles and built a sod shack. But the brothers remained in four or five tents on the section past City View. They kept the supplies all in one place.

Henry Battell went to inspect land that they had bought from the Government, North of the Saskatchewan River. He took an ox and cart and a neighbour boy for company, and went to survey out the land. He valued it and inspected it.

Then he had to go to Winnipeg to make his report. He took a raincoat and in it rolled up pemican and hardtack and started out to walk. At night he lay down under the open sky with the rolled-up coat under his head. By day he trudged alone. He walked until he met up with a construction gang going East. At Brandon he got a train to Winnipeg.

In the Spring of 1882 the Battell brothers hitched their oxen to the plough and broke some of the land on their farms. The summer was a terrible one for mosquitoes. They formed a thick black blanket on the oxen. "If you ran your hand across their back, it would come up red with blood."

At night they turned the oxen loose, and the oxen always headed against the wind, probably to try to drive off the ferocious mosquitoes. "In the morning I would just jump on the pony and head out whichever way the wind had been during the night. I always found them."

One morning riding for the oxen I passed my brother-in-law's place. His oxen were all turned out grazing and the men were down in the river swimming. Back home Jud laughed to his brothers, as he hitched up the oxen. "You know, I think John must think it's Sunday," he said. "They have the oxen turned out and he and George and Henry are down swimming."

"Perhaps it is Sunday," said Joe. "Let's get the calendar and see."

They looked it up. Sure enough. They were a day out. It was Sunday.

"So we unhitched the oxen and let them go. We never worked on Sunday. And we never travelled on Sunday."

"That was the most favorable season I ever saw," reminisced Jud. "Rain! Rain! Rain!"

The Thunder started to rise and the longer it rained the wider it got. By July first it was a mile across. To celebrate Dominion Day the men all went for a dip in the creek. Gubbins Potter had never learned to swim. It wasn't long before he stepped in a hole and went over his head. He shouted for help. Jud, excellent swimmer that he was, reached him at once, and dragged him out of the water.

"I learned to swim the hard way," said Jud. "But I really learned. Father had a man who had worked for him for years. He was part coon. Name of Bill Hornback." There was no racial antagonism the way Jud said "coon", just affection. "I went with him one Saturday night. He was going to teach me to swim. I got on his back and he swam out over the deep water. Then he slipped out from under, and left me. I worked fast for a while. But he didn't let me drown. And I could always swim afterward."

Jud competed once against Paisley, swimming, at Davis Lake, and beat him, even though Paisley was considered the local champion.

"And I never got a beating, fighting. But I've come awful close to it."

The Fall of 1882 Henry sent for his wife and two daughters. Mrs. Keyes came with them. The men worked frantically to get a house completed before Winter. By November the C.P.R. passenger trains were running to Regina, and a sort of mixed train from there to Moose Jaw. But they wouldn't freight any lumber. The men went to Regina with two wagons and two teams and got lumber to build a house to live in for the winter. About November the women arrived. But only a few scattered souls lived on the prairie that winter.

"You talk about being lonely now, in a blizzard," Jud snorted contemptuously. "We wintered twenty-five head of cattle that year. All we had brought. And all some others had brought. I cut the feed for them with a scythe and raked it with a hand rake. During the winter we hauled hay from a slough near where Wesley Church is now. About ten miles. That was the toughest winter this country ever saw. I would take two yoke of oxen and a bob sleigh with a hay rack on it, and leave home early in the morning. I always found the stack. They talk about snow! I honestly believe there was more snow on the level that year than there is this year. And more blizzard. I always had to shovel an hour or two to get at the hay. I kept the same trail every day. I marked it by taking a load of manure from the barn and throwing out a forkful every so far. But every day the snow would cover it. It got higher and higher. Three feet on the level. Oxen are very ornery. I think they're worse than men even. When they get dry they have to have a drink. They'd reach over to the side for a mouthful of snow and over would go my load. Four or five times on a trip. Finally I learned to bind my load so it wouldn't spill off when they tipped it. Martha would make me a lunch. And when noon came, I'd have to build a fire to thaw it out, so I could eat it. The trip would take all day. I'd get home at dark. And it would stay 35° and 40° below, a week at a time."

"In 1884 my brother and I opened the first butcher shop. Meat wasn't very dear. The white people wanted the best meat. So I used to sell the poorer meat to the Sioux Indians who were camped South of town. They had massacred Custer in 1881 and fled to Canada for protection. My store stood about where the Metropolitan Store with the glass front, is now. I learned to talk to the Indians. A fellow would come in on horse-back, jump off and throw down his lines—never used a hitching post. I'd point to the horse and say, 'Talk-a-ja-pay'. They would say 'Shu-kan-kow'. I would write that down just like it sounded on a tablet I kept for that person, and say it over and over until I could say it just like they did. Maybe the next day an Indian and Squaw and Papoose would come in a wagon. Again I would point to the wagon

and say, 'Talk-a-ja-pay', and they would answer, 'Chim-ba-gany'. Then I'd learn that. That is how I learned the Indian language. They used to call me 'Big Chief'." Jud Battell smiled at the memory.

"In some ways," he said, "the Indians show more sense than the white men. For instance, they name their children after they are born, and for some reason. There was a chief died not long ago in Assiniboia hospital. He was able to walk. But he didn't have the right use of his feet and they named him 'Cha-chuska'. 'Cha' for 'foot' and 'chuska' for 'rotten'. 'Rotten Foot'. Then there was another. They called him 'Ah-Chevilay'. 'Big Stomach'. Indians were just like us, good and bad. I knew a lot of them."

(Note: Purely phonetic pronunciation.)

CHAPTER III

I visited Ontario in the Summer of '83. I went down about July first, to help my father with the barley harvest, and decided to stay all winter. The time was long on my hands, so my Father gave me a horse and I served that winter in the cavalry in the Militia in Ontario. What I learned was useful later when we had to fight the Indians during the Rebellion of '85. In the early Spring of '84 I came back and brought a carload of settlers effects to sell. I had a team of horses, and among other things, apples that I had bought at a dollar a barrel, but they froze on the way, and I was lucky to get my money back.

A man named Connor, a Syrian Jew, wanted to buy the team, but he didn't have much money. However, he had a partner, a Polander, Moliski, who worked for the C.P.R. and got paid by the month. They agreed to give me a hundred dollars to start and to pay something on the rest, each month. A month went by and—no money. So I thought I would go down to see them. I went on Saturday. But Moliski hadn't brought any money yet. Sunday was a beautiful day. It was starting to break Spring, and the ice was going out. People were walking along the River bank, when they discovered a body, almost nude, lying on the ice, with some water over it. There was a logging chain fastened around the waist. At once they reported it to the Mounted Police. The Mounties followed the track where the body had been dragged by a horse. The track led to Connor's barn. Monday the hunt for Connor started.

The horses were not in the barn. Nobody was at the shack. Somebody told the police that I had sold him the horses, so they came to me. I gave them all the information I could. I told them I had been there Saturday. The police wanted me to see if anything in the house was changed. So we went to the house. The place was not locked. We went in. I kicked a rug on the floor. "This wasn't here, Saturday," I said. The policeman lifted it. There was blood on the floor. Someone had been scraping at it with a knife. The wall was blood-spattered. It looked bad for Connor. Monday evening he came back to the shack.

The police took him into custody and questioned him. He denied the killing. He identified his partner. Said he was the only friend he had in the country. Senator Ross' father was the magistrate who tried him, at the preliminary hearing. There was no proof except that he must have been in the shack after the killing. He was taken to Regina, and tried in court there. I believe Judge Richardson was the magistrate. He was found guilty of murder and hanged. It seemed he wanted to marry a girl he had been going with, and he planned to take all the equipment for himself. Evidently he

hoped that the weight of the chain with which he had dragged the body behind the horse, would be enough to sink the body. Instead it snagged in the ice. He was the first man hanged at Regina jail. Some records say Riel was the first man hanged, but that isn't so.

I lived on the farm in '84 and batched with my brother. Our neighbours were the Card family. There were four boys. They came from Cobourg, the same as the Battell family. We used to practise running and jumping, in our spare time. There was a celebration in Moose Jaw on May 24, 1884. They held it on Main Street. I was the only white man taking part in the sports. My contestants were young Indians. The Indians were the best long-distance runners. But I could beat them on short distances. There was one Indian Longboat, who was good at both. On that Sports' Day, May 24, 1884, we had horse races, too, from the station to the foot of the hill. They had ox races. And the oxen really could run.

After that, Moose Jaw held their Sports' Day regularly on the twenty-fourth of May, and Regina held theirs July first. Henry Card and I thought we would go to Regina that year. There was a three-legged race advertised with a prize of ten dollars offered. We thought that was pretty good, so we entered. We won it too. Then we found out the ones we had beaten were professionals. When we accepted the ten dollars that made us professionals. So we were disqualified from all the other events. Ha! Ha! We were professionals. And hadn't even known it. There was a half-mile race. They wouldn't let me enter. So I ran it for the exercise. I got far enough ahead to stop and walk.

After that I was pretty well known in Regina. I wasn't allowed to enter in Regina but their high jump champion bet me a hundred dollars he could beat me. We jumped and I won the hundred dollars. A fellow from Toronto was watching and he said he'd like to jump against me for a hundred dollars. Money was scarce, and I didn't want to win a hundred dollars just to throw it away again, so I wasn't very anxious. Charlie Houston who ran the Windsor Hotel across the street from where the Clayton Hotel is now, said he would back me. He took me over to the Hotel, gave me a hot bath, and a rub down and a stiff drink of whiskey. They set the jumping apparatus up in the street out in front of the Hotel. I had never tasted whiskey before and I couldn't see the pole. I said, "Put up the pole." They said, "It's there." So I said, "Put it down a little. It's so high I can't see it." I jumped first. I would run about thirty yards and go over sideways holding my body flat. He had the queerest way of jumping I ever saw. He would face the stick, standing quite close, just jig up and down, flexing his muscles till they stood right out on his legs, then away he'd go, and over. They kept raising the stick, until I could just see over. It was five feet nine. I cleared it by two inches, the crowd said. He tried three times

and knocked the stick down each time. So I won. There was a man called Le Jeune, a bank manager, watching. He bet fifty dollars on me. And won his money.

In Moose Jaw they didn't make me stay in the professional class. In Moose Jaw I won the hundred and twenty yard dash—two heats, the running high jump, vaulting, the running long jump, and the hop, step and jump. They gave a prize for the aggregate. And I won it. The Regina champion wasn't satisfied. He wanted a one-heat hundred yard race. So we ran it, and I won that.

Even after I was married I was the champion, for years.

I began to feel my lack of education. I never went to school in Ontario after I was eight years old, except each winter time. And it was a mile and three-quarters to go. So I started, now to go to night school. I loved music. My mother used to play the melodian when we were children, and we'd all gather round and sing. The winter of 1884 I got a Frenchman who was very musical—used to lead a choir back in Montreal—to teach me to sing. He and I sang duets around here for years. And plays. We had a play where I was Bluebeard, and the lady who is my wife now, and wasn't my wife yet then, played my seventh wife. We knew how to amuse ourselves in those days, and make our own entertainment.

CHAPTER IV

And then came the rebellion. The shooting started at Duck Lake. The half-breeds had been getting more unhappy about the way they were used, and about the surveyors cutting through their long farms to make quarter sections. They sent for Riel to come back from the States. Riel drew up a paper of their claims and sent it to the government. They ignored it. The chiefs were trying to keep their young braves in hand. But the young men were pretty hostile. Riel called on the Indians to rise against the government. At Duck Lake, near Prince Albert, the Metis fought with the Mounted Police and killed several. The government ordered the militia from Eastern Canada. They were young fellows, store clerks and city fellows. I've seen them cry with weariness after walking forty-five miles a day. The government had to get people to handle the transport wagons because all these people had to be fed, and their munitions moved. They established routes from Fort Qu'Appelle north to Prince Albert, and from Swift Current to Battleford. April ninth I joined the transport. They shipped our horses and outfits to Swift Current from here. We got up there in the evening, unloaded, and took our equipment up on a hill north of the tiny town. We made a corral of the wagons, got feed for the horses, made our beds down in the middle of the corral, and went to sleep.

In the morning we woke up with six inches of snow over us. We had to pull up the bedding to keep the snow out of our faces. As soon as the military arrived, we got together, loaded our outfits and started for Battleford. About thirty miles north of Swift Current we came to the Saskatchewan River. We camped there that night. The next morning, there was a big flat bottomed boat. It came from Prince Albert. We were able to drive our teams right on to the boat and they took us across the river. It took two days to get us all across, at the Swift Current landing. Then we proceeded to Battleford.

When war broke out there was between \$70,000 and \$100,000 worth of supplies being hauled into Battleford by men who drove big freighter wagons, for the spring opening of the stores. There were several different outfits and they weren't all together. When the scouts told them the Indians were rising in rebellion these truckers just drove off the trail into low places or coulees, and left their wagons there, got on a horse's back and rode for home. That left all these valuable caches abandoned between Saskatchewan Landing and Battleford.

Before we got started from Saskatchewan Landing they sent out scouts to see that the road was clear, and nobody hiding in ambush. The scouts returned at night and one fellow that I knew, Tommy Bevis, said, "There's a nice cache not far from here, maybe twenty-five miles, and off on the west side of the trail."

We had signed up in a hurry. We had some bedding with us. The government supplied our food. But my neighbour and I had no knives, plates or forks. We decided to watch for this cache and see if we could find any. We didn't like eating with our fingers. Fred Cropper, who later married a girl in Moose Jaw, (her mother ran a hotel), Andy Delgarno, who died in 1945, and I, were the last three teams in line, and there were fifty teams in the line. We got a couple of soldiers to drive our teams and we started to try to find this cache. We found it about three-quarters of a mile from the trail. There were two wagons loaded with stuff and four or five carts. So we helped ourselves to what we needed most. There were plates, cups, knives, forks, tobacco and boots. We started back for the trail, but the outfits had got ahead of us. We had to run on foot. So we hid our stuff near the trail and put a buffalo head beside the trail to mark the spot. Then we had to run our hardest to catch the others. They were just about to stop for the night when we caught them. When they found a good place they made a corral of the wagons, putting the tents and horses inside. We were close to a slough where there was water for the horses and for us. We cooked supper. Then the three of us drew lots to see who would go back for the cache. It fell to me. Thibeau, a livery man, had a light team. I knew his horse could outrun any Indian pony. It had won all the running races. So I asked him for his horse, saddled him, put a blanket over the saddle and led him down to the slough to water him. I went over to the sergeant of the guard and told him I had lost my blanket, back a piece, and I wanted to go back to look for it. I asked him to tell me the countersign so I could get back in, but he considered me a civilian and said he couldn't tell it. However, he assured me he would let me back in. But there was an outer guard. That's what worried me. However, I set out. I rode hard. And I never looked back. Remember I was just a boy. And seeing all that stuff just lying there for the taking had been too much for me. In the end the whole one hundred thousand dollars worth was a total loss. Someone might just as well have used all of it. I jumped on the pony and rode hard. I had no rifle, no ammunition. I figured I was under military jurisdiction the same as the soldiers. I wasn't so sure how I would stand with the authorities. It seemed to me I was riding an awful long way. And I couldn't see that buffalo head. I guess it wasn't so far, but I began to wonder about Indians. Supposing I ran into a band. And they scalped me. My scalp began to draw tight. It was nearly dark. I wished I had a gun. At last I saw the buffalo head. I jumped off the pony, and leading him, paced a hundred paces. There was no sign of the stuff. I was sure it ought to be there. I started going round and round in circles, widening them each time. Suddenly I stopped. It was quite dark. And I realized I was hopelessly lost. I had no idea which way was our camp.

I wondered what I would do. But there was nothing I could do, until morning. Suddenly the moon came out from under a cloud. It was as bright as day. And then I heard someone coming at a gallop, on horseback. He came closer and closer and closer. Could it be an Indian? My horse whinnied. I put my hand on his nose to shut off the sound. I was sure the rider was coming straight for me. I was terrified. My hair stood on end. And then the hoofbeats got further and further away. I pulled myself together. Of course. That horse was on the trail. I set off in that direction leading the pony. And then I came smack on to our pile of goods. I had a four bushel sack. I loaded the stuff in, tied it and put it on the horse. Then I went on and came to the trail. It was still dark. I had no watch. I had no idea what time it was or how long I had been. I got on the pony and rode in the direction that I thought our camp lay. After a long time I saw a lot of lights. I reined in the horse. Perhaps I had gone in the wrong direction. Perhaps it was an Indian camp. I wished sincerely that I had looked back as I rode away from our camp, so that I would know how it had looked in the darkness. Slowly I went on. For a long time I seemed to get no closer. Then I heard the voice of the outguard: "Halt. And give the countersign." But I didn't know the countersign. Perhaps I'd be court-martialled and shot. It was pitch dark. I kept on going. "Halt. Or I'll fire." I halted. He came and talked to me. I told him the sergeant at the guard tent had said he would let me back in. We walked up to the guard tent. But it was a different sergeant on duty. They went and got the other sergeant out of bed and he identified me, and they let me in. It was 3 a.m. The boys were sure glad to see me. They hadn't slept any more than I had. I had been afraid the guards would open my sack and find all this stuff I wasn't supposed to have. But they didn't. We divided up the stuff and put it in our own rigs. Then we went to bed. In the morning we were awfully sleepy. But we were up and ready to go with the rest of them.

That day we pushed through to Battleford. We averaged 45 miles a day on that trip from Swift Current to Battleford under Colonel Otter. And that is fast for a wagon train. Battleford, then, was really the head of the government for the North West Territories. Judge Rouleau officiated. They had built him a beautiful ten thousand dollar house on the south side of the river. When the people who lived at Battleford heard that the Metis were rising, they all laid in provisions. The judge had men dig down under the cellar of his house and hide a huge cache of provisions there. But when the attack really came, the people all had to crowd into the fort. And the fort was on the north side of the river. However the Indians would allow the Judge and some men to cross to his house. But one day they got suspicious of the large parcels that they used to carry back. So they burned his house to the ground.

As we approached the town our scouts ran into the Indians in the south town—and chased them out of ambush. The word soon spread that the militia had come, and the Indians vanished. We camped on the South side of the river. And we went through some of the homes that the Indians had pillaged. Such destruction you never saw! They had been really nice houses. But they were ruined now. Most people had feather beds. The Indians had slit the ticks and scattered the feathers. We walked knee-deep in them. They had taken axes and slashed any nice furniture like an organ. Beautiful clocks hung on the wall, with their works all hanging loose. It was heart-breaking. But I guess that's war.

We camped on the South side that night, and next day we crossed the river. In the fort we found several hundred souls, all crowded in together and with provisions enough to last only two days. They were hysterical with joy when they realized that the militia had come.

We sent out scouts. And some of us went back to meet the other teams, and to get provisions for the garrison. We found another cache of goods not far from Battleford. We put up a mark and later, when we had time, we went back. We made camp and left one man in charge of the horses. There were ten men and we spread out a hundred feet apart. We took our bearings. The sun was just setting. The first man to see the cache was to fire his gun once. When we heard the shot, we all rushed. This cache was much bigger than the other. We had an axe we had used to make our camp fire, so we opened up the cases. There was everything you could think of—boots, shoes, shirts, linen of all kinds, silver ware and even a case of Stetson hats. From that day on I always wore a Stetson hat. The last thing I crammed into my sack was a five pound box of chocolates.

Next day we got orders to bring in Poundmaker and his men who had fled to the North. Thirty teams were to be ready to go right after dinner. We were loaded with three hundred soldiers, provisions and ammunition, one gattling gun, two cannons, and rifles, heavy coats for the soldiers and bedding. We left between twelve and one p.m. and travelled till nine p.m. By that time the Scouts had located the Indians. Colonel Otter of the Queen's Own Toronto Regiment was in charge. Colonel Otter wanted to catch Poundmaker before he got away.

At nine we hadn't even watered the horses. So we watered and fed the horses and had a little lunch ourselves. We didn't stop long. Just as it was coming daylight in the morning we found their camp. But it was deserted. We could see they had just left it, during the night. Our orders were to follow their trail.

We went on about three miles, and we came to Cutknife Creek. It was a creek with a very bad bottom. The only possible crossing was just where the wagon trail crossed the creek. The scouts had been out ahead of us, but they had been spread out trying to find another crossing. However there wasn't any. So just as we got to the creek the scouts all met back at the trail. Colonel Otter made us wait, so that the scouts could get on ahead.

From the creek the road ran straight up a hill. There was a ravine full of bush coming down to the creek on either side of the road, about two hundred feet away. The scouts rode up the hill. At that instant the Indians fired on them. In the meantime we were crossing the creek and I was the last team in the line. When I heard the shots, I stood up and shielded my eyes to see if I could see anything. Just then Captain French came riding hard back down the hill. "For God's sake," he shouted. "If you don't want to all be killed, get up to the top of the hill." Even as he spoke "Zing", a bullet went past me on one side. "Zing", another on the other. I leaped right out on to the wagon tongue and crouched down between the two horses while I laid on the whip from left to right. We galloped to the top of the hill.

There was a sort of saucer in the top of the hill. We circled our wagons and formed a corrall. We put the horses on the inside. Colonel Otter gave the order to get ready to fire. The sun was just coming over the horizon. It was about the twenty-fifth of May, 1885.

All morning long we fought. The transport men were kept busy carrying ammunition to the soldiers. There was one fellow, a Moose Jaw boy, Billy McDougal, who had a charmed life. He didn't know what fear was. He had to go in plain sight of the Indians, with ammunition for the gatling guns, and never got a scratch. The cannon (four pound shell) had been at Battleford ever since the Hudson Bay Company had come there. It needed cleaning badly. They fired only a few shots, till it jumped off the truck entirely. We had to take ropes and tie it down.

The sun was unmercifully hot for only May. We had no water to drink. We had had no breakfast and no supper the night before, only a little bit of lunch. The men were getting in a bad way. They weren't in any condition to fight. The Indians had got about fifteen or twenty of our men, too. That made us pretty sick at heart. They were friends and neighbours. A lot had been wounded too. Some of the soldiers were Battleford homeguard men. They were used to this kind of fighting. But the Indians were crafty. They would put a blanket over a stick and tie it down a piece with a string to make it look like a head. They would hold that up, and our men would shoot and give their positions away. Then the Indians got them. The worst thing I ever saw was a man shot right through his cheek. He had no face left. It was awful. We had

doctors with us. They attended to the wounded the best they could. The Indians would manoeuvre so that they could see right into our corral. Our gattling guns were useless, because the Indians were all hidden in the bush. If they had been in the open, we could have mowed them down. The odds were all against us. We were trapped. Finally a fellow by the name of Charlie Ross from Battleford went to Colonel Otter, and told him how one time, several years before, a tribe of these Blackfeet had wiped out a whole tribe of Sarcees on this same ground. He said, "If we stay here till dark comes on there won't be a man of us left alive. We'll be annihilated." The Colonel could see he was right. Charlie said, "Give me fifty men with bayonets and we'll charge them, while you get the teams lined up and drive out of here, as hard as you can, for Battleford." Colonel Otter consented. There were cutbanks and the men with bayonets got down out of sight behind them. At the Colonel's signal they charged, on either side of the road, and the wagon train started down the hill at a gallop. The Indians were so surprised they fell back before the attack. Even at that there were some men lost for the bullets seemed to be flying on all sides. But the men in the wagons had some cover. There was one fellow. He was scared to death. He made the men pile bags of oats all around him. Then we drove like fury.

It was the strangest sight you ever saw, with the wounded, the living and the dead, all piled into the wagons together. And you couldn't tell one from the other. There were thirteen men on my wagon. Some were suffering from shock, and as we crossed the creek, they fired the cannon to cover our retreat. These shell-shocked men would jump and throw their hands into the air. Even when we got a long distance away they were sure they could still hear the cannon.

When we got to the old Indian camp we had something to eat and drink, and watered and fed the horses. We didn't get home to Battleford until after midnight.

We rested the next day and we had a funeral, and we buried the dead. We did what we could for the wounded. And then we tried to forget it. We put on a minstrel show. A fellow named Nelson, who afterwards lived in Moose Jaw, was our leading man.

CHAPTER V

Some of the men had to go to Swift Current on business. They picked a fellow in our outfit to drive them because he had a light team which could run very fast. As they drove back through the woods where the boys had cached their stuff, out of the last find, this fellow told the men all about it. He was a fellow from Brandon, this driver. Well, they took the whole thing.

Then the depot clerk scheme was organized. Ten teams were put in each division, with a depot clerk at each divisional point, and they were to drive the stuff in relays, each outfit going twenty miles, and turning their loads over to another outfit. We hadn't any protection except a rifle each—a carbine—and one hundred rounds of ammunition. They kept this system up until Poundmaker captured twenty teams. He learned what they were doing, so he and his braves came on them at night, when two outfits were at one station. He took them all prisoners, and took all the supplies for his men. The other station heard of it through scouts and all the other outfits between there and the Landing rushed back to Saskatchewan Landing. Someone had to take word of the capture through to the officials. We drew cuts to see who would go through to Battleford to notify the military that the teams had been captured and that no supplies would come through. The first fellow drawn, started through, but it got so hot for him that he turned around, and came back to camp. He was scared stiff, and the Indians had nearly got him.

There was a fellow, a farmer north of Pense. I knew him well. Name of Joe, I don't know how you spell it, but it was pronounced Kee-low. He used to come to Regina when I was there. I've stayed for dinner at his place lots of times. He was little. But he had lots of sand. He went to British Columbia later, and lived for a number of years. Then, I never heard of him again. Well Joe Keelow told the depot clerk, "If you let me pick the horse I want, I'll go. I'll ride up near where this fellow turned back and I'll wait till they've had time to all get sound asleep. By then my horse will be rested, and I'll go through.

There was nothing to do but let him try. He did it. He got three-quarters of the way through before they knew he was there. Then they fired on him, and chased him. But he never stopped, and he got the word through to Battleford. *And that man was never recognized for his achievement.*

The Crees at Frog Lake killed a number of settlers. Big Bear's tribe, in the meantime had killed a couple of priests and shot all the settlers at Fort Pitt in cold blood, except the Hudson Bay man and two of the women. Big Bear advised the mounties to go to Battleford. Then he, himself, hid in the woods for most of the summer.

In the meantime the government troops captured Riel and took him to Regina. Poundmaker and the braves with him came in and surrendered and gave up their prisoners. The old chief had persuaded the fiery young men to save the prisoners' lives. So that while Riel was hung, Poundmaker and Big Bear were just imprisoned.

General Middleton decided to leave a number of soldiers in the country, for a year. He sent a man from Swift Current to pick out three hundred teams out of the five hundred, to transport a year's supplies for the soldiers. He discharged the other transport drivers and they went home, wherever they belonged. I was one of the three hundred picked.

There were a lot of provisions at the depot stations North of Swift Current and some at a place a little north of Saskatoon called Clark's Crossing. He wanted these moved to Battleford.

We were supposed to start at a certain time. And then came the first strike in the history of the North-West. The teamsters got together. We didn't know Poundmaker had surrendered. Some asked for more protection, more guns and ammunition and for fifty scouts to go ahead.

The man went back to Swift Current, thirty miles, and wired General Middleton, that the men refused to go on the same terms as before. Middleton thought the man wasn't capable of handling the situation, so he recalled him and sent up another man. The men felt the government needed them, and they were independent. They had been getting ten dollars a day and their keep, and for days they hadn't had to lift a trace. They told the second man they wouldn't go without what they had asked.

General Middleton recalled the second man and sent out another man with word that his terms now were only eight dollars a day. They could take that or every last man could go home. The men refused again. The official ordered the boat to take their outfits to the South bank. The boat loaded two outfits, one of them mine, and then the ferry man refused to work any more that night. When the others saw the government really meant it, they all weakened and said they'd stay. But here we were on the South bank. However the official's camp was on the South bank too, so I went to see him. I went to his tent and for the first time I saw him up close. It was Le Jeune, the Bank Manager, from Regina, who had bet fifty dollars on my jumping, and had won. At first he didn't know me, I had grown up a lot, and changed. I told him I had tried to get the men to stay. He said he was sorry he could do nothing for me. I said all right. But I had learned a lesson I would never forget. Then I said good night, and turned to go out of his tent. He called me back. He said, "Wait. You've got your team. I have to move my stuff across the river. I'll have to hire somebody to do that. Tomorrow morning take down my tent and load everything and go across

on the ferry. When you get across, you can stay and go back to work."

I worked for three weeks more, at eight dollars a day. It was good pay, those days. I was lucky. My neighbour who had crossed over on the ferry with me, didn't hold any grudge because I got back to work and he didn't. I told him to take my sack of loot home to Moose Jaw, the sack I had risked my scalp for, and to give it to my landlady at the hotel and tell her I said for her to keep it.

CHAPTER VI

In 1884 my brother and I bought the first steam thresher in the district. At that time farming was on a small scale, because there was not yet much land broken. Five hundred bushels was a big crop. We had to move the machine long distances. We started from Moose Jaw, but we couldn't start threshing until everybody had their grain stacked. We only carried an engineer, and my brother and I ran the separator and looked after the feeding. The farmer had to have men to put the grain through, and take away the straw. There was no blower on that machine. It was a hard job tending the carriers. It was dirty.

We worked toward Buffalo Lake, and threshed two or three jobs on the way. Up near the Lake there was a large settlement. People had settled there the Spring of '83. Gilmours came the Winter of '82. There were the McCartney's, Thomson's, who all came from the same place in Ontario, and George Sylveyn. Then we would go East across the Moose Jaw Creek over toward Stony Beach. Ed Love lived there. Joe Young. Alex Switzer. And the Fletcher's. Then we'd move East to Joe Keelow's and Garway's at Pense. There was an English lord settled there near Pense, toward Grand Coulee. He was the biggest farmer in that part of the country at that time. Then we'd swing West. There was no settlement much at Belle Plaine. But there were settlers on the Moose Jaw Creek, South of Moose Jaw fifteen or twenty miles. Coventry's. Annabel's. Mac Annabel was a man who helped a lot of people. He handled horses and oxen. He bought and sold them by the carload. He was a member of the Assembly at Regina after Jim Ross. He had a strange laugh. Everybody knew him by his laugh. A long-drawn A-A-A-h before he really started to laugh. To begin with it was sort of put on, but it got to be a habit. He was a smart man.

Then we threshed for Thomson's, west of Moose Jaw (Ben's father, the people who had the cow which sold for ten thousand dollars). Hopkins, Joel Bates. He used to lead the Methodist choir when I sang in it. Pascoe's. He was Mayor for many years. We used to thresh as far as Boharm. Greene's. I think the Getty boys got a horse power machine the same year we got the steam engine.

Nine out of every ten we threshed for were bachelors. There were very few women in the country. And women are pretty necessary at threshing time. After threshing all day we would all go in and prepare vegetables and things for the next day.

My friend Wilbur Eddy, and I slept every night, under the carrier. We put up horse blankets for shelter and banked it with the fresh, clean straw.

After we were finished threshing the winter of '85 to '86, Wilbur said to me, "How would you like to go to Pincher Creek."

I said, "Never heard of it."

He said, "It's near Medicine Hat. You take the narrow gauge railway to Lethbridge."

The Galt mine was just being opened in Lethbridge. In the early days all our coal came from there. The town was full of miners. But I think all the card artists from Canada were there, as well as from across the line. The miners all had lots of money and had to spend it. The town was all temporary buildings, and tents, and not nearly enough accommodation. If you wanted something to eat at twelve o'clock, you had to be in the lineup at eleven.

We met a French barber who used to be in Moose Jaw. Joe Millet. He had shot at a mounted policeman on River Street. He wasn't very comfortable here after that so he went to Lethbridge and located.

Millet wanted to show us around the town. They had what they called a free and easy show, every night. I've seen quite a lot of shows in my time but that free and easy show, there, beat anything I ever saw. It was like a minstrel show. There was no other kind of entertainment so everybody went.

Millet wanted us to see the coal mine, so he took us down to the river to the entrance in the side of the bank. They were in about fifteen hundred feet at that time.

"Would you like to go in?" the foreman asked. Eddy shook his head.

"Come on Joe," I said. "You and I will go."

There was a little car on the narrow track, with a horse hitched to it. It was going in empty so we got in. We went about a thousand feet. It looked as if it would collapse on us at any minute. The water was dripping from the ceiling. The Frenchman was scared. He hollered like a loon.

"You can't go out, till I go with a trainload," said the boss.

So we hung around and talked with the miners. In lots of places there was no room to work even on their knees. They had to start lying down and work with the pick. Then they'd push the coal back and finally come out and load it into the car.

We took the stage from Lethbridge to Fort McLeod, and there we met an ex-mountie, Hank Casey, right from my own home town. Hank took us out to the Indian Reserve north of Fort McLeod. He wanted to show us something he said he had never seen before, and he didn't think we had either. In this reserve was an Indian rattlesnake charmer. I've never seen a rattlesnake on the prairie. But the Old Man River ran through that spot and the rattlers were plentiful. The Indian would go out and pick up one of these perfectly wild rattlers and coil it around his neck. And the

snake wouldn't touch him. They said the Indian used to rub something all over his body that was deadly poison to the snake. So the snake didn't get any nearer than he had to.

We took another stage coach there to go to Pincher Creek. It was a regular stage coach with room for seven or eight passengers inside and the driver's seat outside. It had four horses on it. They had half-way houses between Lethbridge and McLeod and between McLeod and Pincher Creek, where they could change horses, and the passengers could have something to eat.

One of these was run by a man who had moved up from Texas, where he had been a rancher. He wasn't a big rancher in Alberta. He farmed and kept just a few horses and cattle. His name was Le Grand and his wife was a squaw. We had a very nice dinner there. The house was nice—just a one-storey building.

There was a cowboy hired to halter-break and saddle-break the horses. Then he used to take them to Calgary to sell them. He thought he would show us Easterners an exhibition of broncho busting, so while we were eating he saddled up and got ready to ride. There were two or three ladies with us on the trip and when the old man said everything was ready, we all went out to watch. The horse was a bad actor and he wasn't long in unseating the cowboy and throwing him off. Then they saddled another horse and brought him out.

"Let me ride him," I said.

"He'll kill you," said Le Grand.

"You don't care."

"Don't you?"

"If I can stay on this horse, will you give me five dollars?"

He jumped at that deal. I'd seen lots of bucking horses in my day. I'd seen an Exhibition given in Regina in '84 for the Prince of Wales, where the best broncho-busters in the country rode. I tied the stirrups together underneath the horse so I wouldn't get my foot caught and get dragged to death. I put a hame strap through at the back of the saddle. I blindfolded the horse and got two fellows to hold him till I got in the saddle. Then I threw down the lines, grasped the saddle horn in one hand and the saddle strap in the other and held on for dear life. The horse went up and around and up like a snapping whip. He circled the barn and then the corral. But I was still there. The women were laughing, and everyone was waiting to see what would happen.

The door of the house was open and when that beast couldn't throw, he started for the door of the house. That was enough for me. I stepped off to one side, caught the lines, turned him around and led him back to Le Grand.

Le Grand was delighted.

"Where are you going boy?"

"I don't know. But I'm on my way."

"Stay here. I have a nice ranch. And we've no children. When we are gone the ranch is yours."

I shook my head and I kept on going. The cowboy was furious with jealousy. But it's a good thing I didn't wait for that ranch. In 1916 I went to the Calgary stampede and I saw the son of Le Grand who at that time wasn't even born, win the world championship for broncho-busters.

Wilbur Eddy and I continued our trip to Pincher Creek. We got a man to drive us out to his brother's place. He lived all alone at a ranch just at the foot of the mountains. His place was all fenced, and he did some farming. At that time grain was expensive. They sold it all by the pound—not the bushel.

One day a man came along.

"Would you fellows like a job?" he asked.

"Not me," said Wilbur.

But the other Eddy brother said, "What kind of job?"

"Packing the winter's provisions into a lumber camp up near the Divide."

Eddy, himself, was willing and I thought it would be a new experience, so we hired on, leaving Wilbur at the ranch.

There was the boss and three more men. We had a bunch of horses and mules with pack saddles. We had had the stuff freighted to Pincher Creek. Now we loaded it onto the animals and we started for the Crow's Nest Pass.

There were lots of places where the path was no more than two feet wide. When you looked over the edge—you could see a sheer drop of a thousand feet. They arranged the packtrain with a man every so far down the train to try to keep the horses and mules in line. The mules were more ornery than the horses. When they would get mad they would start crowding. If they had had nobody between they would have crowded the whole string off the edge, and all of them would have been lost. As it was we only lost about six. It was no use even going to look at them, after they went over that edge.

In some places the path ran along the edge of a river through the great trees. There was just this toe path and the mules would go amongst the trees and try to scratch the packs off their backs. It was when we got up high that the mountain storms hit us. We would be almost blinded with the snow. We couldn't wear mitts, just silk gloves with kid gloves over the top, because we had to watch the packs which were tied on with rawhide, and every so often we'd have to re-tie the knots. You wouldn't have time to take mitts off. We were fortunate to have as few mishaps as we had.

We packed in enough provisions to supply forty men in camp, all winter. This camp was getting out bond timber for the Galt mine. It would be put in the mine where the

wall seemed liable to cave. The timbers were a foot across. They would cut quite close to the river and snake the timbers down to the stream using horses. Then the timbers would float right down the river to the Lethbridge mine. There they made a boom. And kept them till they were ready to use them.

The men in charge of the camp hired Eddy and me to haul hay for the camp horses. There was a stack of hay about seven miles away in a little valley. We put four horses on a wagon with a three-top box fixed with a little rack, in which to haul the hay. We would get up in the morning and get the horses fed, and by daylight we'd be away. But what a road! Some places we had to drive right in the river bottom to get through. The leaders would break the ice and then the other horses pull the load through. Then we'd come to a sheer climb where we'd have to hold the four lines in one hand and hang on ourselves to keep from falling off the load. We'd be gone all day. It would be pitch dark at night when we'd get back to camp.

That was the roughest bunch of men I ever saw in my life, in that lumber camp. Most of them were avoiding the law from across the line, and some from Canada. There was nothing to do after supper but to tell stories and sing. They had made it a rule, you had to take your turn, and either tell a story or sing a song, or else they'd put you in a blanket, and bounce you. I always sang. I used to sing sad songs, and soldier songs. I used to sing "I Left Ireland and Mother Because We Were Poor". I was just a slip of a boy, and you know, I've seen those tough cruel men, some criminals, with the tears running down their faces. It just proves that even the worst of people can have a heart.

When we had the hay all in there was nothing to do but to go back to Eddy's farm.

A couple of days before Christmas we loaded up two wagons with poles to take into Pincher Creek to sell. Eddy and I got on the loads and went to town. In Pincher Creek I met a fellow who was an ex-policeman, Frank Parks. At one time he farmed north of Moose Jaw, but now he and a partner had a store in Pincher Creek. He invited me to a Christmas celebration.

About a quarter of a mile out of town there was a big house. Then the town started and the rancher moved away. The R.N.W.M.P. had taken over the house for a barracks, and that is where the celebration was being held. I think there were five or six mounties stationed there.

There was a room about forty feet long and they had set up a special table where thirty or more people could sit down. The guests were mostly ex-mounties, ranchers from the neighbouring districts, and business people of the town—and they were all men. We had a banquet that day—everything you could think of to eat or drink.

There was a government surveyor named Austen, who

could play the cornet. When we left the barracks, he organized a band. We had cornet, violin, and trombone, and those who couldn't play an instrument would beat a metal pot with a piece of iron, or jangle a logging chain. We marched up the main street of the town one ahead of the other, to the tune of "The Campbells Are Coming. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

We came to the pool room, and we had a concert. Some told stories. Others sang. I sang the songs I had been singing in the lumber camp.

When we got tired of the pool room, we marched somewhere else. We visited every place of business in town and every place treated us. Even the grocery stores had candies, nuts and raisins. We never went to bed at all.

At daylight we went to the one hotel. It was run by a Frenchman. His wife and wife's sister were the only two white women in Pincher Creek at that time. We had breakfast in the hotel.

I was sleepy and wanted to go to bed. But my friend said, "No. Not yet. Today we have horse races, foot races, and all that kind of thing."

Early before dinner the town was full of people. The saloons were full too. It was like summer. A chinook wind had sprung up during the night and the snow had all disappeared. In the afternoon the Committee put on the races. But I was too sleepy to run. I saw an empty bench in the saloon where I was and I stretched out to have a little nap. In the next room a poker game was in session. There was a door opening into that room just by my head. In a moment I heard sounds of a row. I jumped up and looked in the door. There was forty-five hundred dollars stacked on the table and over top of it, four drawn revolvers.

A chap had come from the East, supposed to be a greenhorn, and the boys had invited him in on the game. Most of the men were wealthy ranchers. There was a bank in town. Every so often you'd see one of the ranchers go down to the bank to get more money, (they didn't consider cheques), and the boys weren't doing so well. The show-down came when the stakes were pretty high and the greenhorn had to draw two guns to protect his winnings when a cowboy reached for the pot without the formality of showing his hand, on a show-down. He wasn't so green. Forty-five hundred dollars.

The excitement "got" a big fellow who was looking on. He pulled his gun and popped out all the windows, just for fun. Men grabbed him, and took his gun.

A few nights later they had a Ball. I don't think anybody slept in that town that night or all the next day. No Indians came to the Ball because Indians don't dance as we do, but the squaws came in the bright-colored silks and satins. The half-breeds and their women came too. All the white men came and the two white women, the Frenchman's

wife and her sister, and even though they didn't speak English, these two women were two queens that night. They never had a chance to sit down.

Everybody danced with everybody. There were no introductions. You just grabbed them up and danced. The breeds called me "The Crooked Dancer"; I don't know why. We danced the Red River Jig, quadrilles, and all the square dances. I loved to dance.

Along toward morning the half-breeds were so jealous they were fighting mad. Their women wouldn't dance with them, if they could get a white man. The Ball ended up with a great big fight. Nobody got hurt, because everyone was past hurting anyone. We had to take the half-breed women home. Their men were too jealous to even look at them.

We went back to the Eddy ranch, and we slept for nearly a week. Then Wilbur and I took the stage and went to Fort McLeod for New Year's Eve. There were quite a few white women there. It was quite a change from Pincher Creek. They had a celebration there. The Commissioner and his wife attended. She was the first lady. We had a good time, but not like the celebration at Pincher Creek.

CHAPTER VII

We took the train for Moose Jaw, and on the way down we decided to go on to Ontario. We stayed two or three days in Moose Jaw, picked up Al Potter, sent most of our money East by mail rather than carrying it, then bought our tickets and set out. That was the winter of '85 and '6, and it was a bad winter. Even when we were coming out from Fort McLeod we had seen hundreds and hundreds of cattle frozen to death where they stood.

Some ranchers had gone in with a thousand head, and come out in the Spring with a hundred.

The railroads were having all kinds of trouble with snow. We got to Winnipeg all right, and we left on the North shore road. We didn't have to go down through the States the way we had come. This side of North Bay we were stopped—snow-bound. The trainmen asked all the people to crowd into the first two first class coaches. The men brought coal from the engine to keep the coaches warm. We were there for four days, and then we ran out of food. Luckily we got moving and the first place we could get food was a Frenchman's, a sort of restaurant. Eddy bought some fruit there.

We had been travelling second class so as to save our money to spend later. But back in the train, as they started to pick up more passengers, the conductor told us we would have to move back to make room for the first-class passengers. We picked up our bags and went back to the other car. But Eddy forgot his fruit. He turned around and went back into the first-class car. He was a great big fellow but as quiet as a lamb. The conductor seemed to be suspicious of us because we were Westerners. When Eddy entered the car the conductor grabbed him and told him to get out. Eddy was a placid fellow, never fought, and wasn't easily excited. But when the conductor put his hands on him, that made him mad.

"Take your hand off me," he said grimly, "or I'll upset your applecart."

The conductor dropped his hand. Eddy picked up his fruit and walked out. At North Bay we were wakened from our sleep so we went down to the end of the car to get a drink of water. As we stood there, in walked the conductor and the town constable, and another great big fellow with a fur coat on.

"That's him," said the conductor pointing at Eddy. The police clapped on the handcuffs and informed him he was under arrest. We found out where Eddy was jailed and we went up to see if we could see him. We were told "No".

"The trial is at ten in the morning. You'll be admitted to the trial."

We went to the trial. The magistrate turned out to be the station agent.

"Fifty dollars and costs."

Between the three of us we raised the fifty dollars, but not having brought much cash with us that left us broke. We went down and got on the next train. It was a different conductor and the first conductor had punched our tickets through to the next divisional point. We were in a spot. We explained what had happened. Of course the conductor couldn't do anything.

There was an old man sitting close to where we were talking. He would be about eighty. He stood up and said, "How much money do you need?" and he pulled out his billfold. We had never seen him before, but we were sure glad to see him then. We told him. He handed us that amount and a little extra. I unclipped my gold watch (it was worth a hundred and twenty-five dollars) and offered it to him. I said, "Keep this till we send you the money."

He shook his head. "I heard your story and I believe you. Never mind the watch. I'll give you my name and address and when you get home you can send me the money."

It was strange that one man should think all Westerners outlaws, and the other should believe them trustworthy.

When I came back West in the Spring I met the lady who is now my wife. Her Father and Mother and the two girls had intended to come in '84, but had delayed on account of the rebellion. So I married and settled down. But those early days were great days. And I saw a lot of history being made—rebellion and all—for a young fellow just fifteen years old.

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